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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 003986

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DEPT FOR S (CKELY), EUR/WE MENNUTI AND NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL 08/13/2012

TAGS: IS PREL PHUM KIRF PREL PHUM KIRF VT VTIS

SUBJECT: POPE APPEALS FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE IN MIDDLE EAST; RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. A) VATICAN 3823

B. B) VATICAN 3503

CLASSIFIED BY: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, D. BRENT HARDT. REASONS:
1.5(B) AND (D)

11. (U) SUMMARY: IN HIS AUGUST 1 ANGELUS MESSAGE, POPE JOHN
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PAUL II MADE A STRONG AND EMOTIONAL APPEAL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, CALLING ON ISRAELITES AND PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO THE PATH OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND URGING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO COMMIT ITSELF TO A PRESENCE IN THE REGION "TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR A PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PARTIES. THE POPE FORCEFULLY STATED THAT "THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE WHO INDISCRIMINATELY KILL INNOCENT DEFENSELESS CIVILIANS." HE EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN FOR THE PLIGHT OF BOTH THE PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS, AND EMPHASIZED THAT NEITHER ATTACKS, ARMS, NOR WALLS OF SEPARATION WOULD LEAD TO A JUST SOLUTION. FINALLY, CALLING ATTENTION TO THE INABILITY OF WORSHIPERS TO ATTEND SERVICES BECAUSE OF THE CURFEWS, HE CONDEMNED WHAT HE TERMED A RESTRICTION ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND APPEALED TO CHRISTIANS LIVING IN THE HOLY LANDS NOT TO ABANDON THE REGION DESPITE THE CURRENT TROUBLES.
END SUMMARY.

POPE ANGUISHED BY CONTINUING VIOLENCE

12. (U) IN HIS FIRST SUNDAY ANGELUS MESSAGE SINCE HIS RETURN FROM CANADA, GUATEMALA AND MEXICO, POPE JOHN PAUL II CHOSE TO MAKE A POINTED APPEAL FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. OBSERVING THAT HE "CAN'T STOP THINKING" ABOUT THE HOLY LANDS WHOSE PEOPLE HAVE NO RESPITE FROM THE "ALMOST DAILY EPISODES OF ABOMINABLE VIOLENCE," THE POPE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHEN THE ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WOULD COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ABILITY TO LIVE TOGETHER "DOES NOT SPRING FROM ARMS." "NEITHER ATTACKS, NOR WALLS OF SEPARATION, NOR RETALIATION WILL EVER LEAD TO AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION OF THE
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CURRENT CONFLICT." HE SAID HE SUFFERS WITH THOSE WHO MOURN THE DESTRUCTION, PARTICULARLY THE INNOCENTS WHO ARE PAYING THE PRICE OF THE CURRENT VIOLENCE.

NO JUSTIFICATION FOR TERROR

13. (U) REINFORCING HIS REJECTION OF TERROR IN ALL FORMS, THE POPE SAID HE WANTED TO REPEAT TO ALL FROM WHATEVER ETHNIC GROUP THEY BELONG TO, THAT "THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE WHO INDISCRIMINATELY KILL INNOCENT DEFENSELESS CIVILIANS." CONVEYING EQUAL CONCERN FOR THE SUFFERING OF BOTH SIDES, THE POPE OBSERVED THAT FROM 1967 TO THE PRESENT THERE HAS BEEN "A TERRIBLE SUCCESSION OF UNSPEAKABLE SUFFERING: SUFFERING OF THE PALESTINIANS, HUNTED FROM THEIR OWN LANDS OR CONSTRAINED, IN RECENT TIMES, TO A STATE OF PERMANENT SIEGE, OBJECTS OF A SORT OF COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT; SUFFERING OF THE ISRAELI POPULATION WHICH LIVES IN DAILY TERROR OF BEING BOMBED BY ANONYMOUS ATTACKERS."

APPEAL FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

14. (C) IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS, THE HOLY SEE HAS INTENSIFIED ITS PUSH FOR SOME FORM OF INTERNATIONAL INTERPOSITION FORCE ON THE GROUND IN THE REGION (REFTELS). REINFORCING THIS MESSAGE, THE POPE CALLED ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY "TO COMMIT ITSELF WITH GREAT DETERMINATION TO BE PRESENT ON THE GROUND, OFFERING THE NEEDED MEDIATION TO CREATE THE
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CONDITIONS FOR A PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PARTIES." AT THE SAME TIME, HE APPEALED TO THE ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO HONEST NEGOTIATIONS."

15. (U) ADDING URGENCY TO HIS APPEAL TO PEACE, THE POPE REITERATED HIS CONCERN FOR CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LANDS -- MANY OF WHOM HAVE BEEN EMIGRATING TO ESCAPE THE VIOLENCE AND LACK OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE STRIFE-TORN REGION. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE POPE ASSERTED THAT THE CURRENT RIGID CURFEW IMPOSED BY THE ISRAELIS HAD RESULTED IN A FUNDAMENTAL VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION, AS BELIEVERS OF ALL FAITHS NO LONGER HAD ACCESS TO PLACES OF WORSHIP.

COMMENT

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AMAD-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 WHA-00
PERC-00 DS-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00 NEA-00
NSAE-00 DSAC-00 DRL-02 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /002W
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R 131615Z AUG 02
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USINT HAVANA

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16. (C) RETURNING TO ROME AFTER HIS EXTENDED VISIT TO THE AMERICAS, THE POPE WAS CLEARLY SEEKING TO USE HIS SUNDAY ANGELUS TO REGISTER HIS DEEP PERSONAL CONCERN AT THE CONTINUING SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE AND TO REINFORCE THE VATICAN'S CURRENT VIEW THAT SOME FORM OF AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE IS NEEDED TO GIVE THE PARTIES A CHANCE TO COOL DOWN FROM CURRENT OVERHEATED EMOTIONS ON BOTH SIDES. ITALIAN NEWSPAPER
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ACCOUNTS OF THE POPE'S STATEMENT SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT BUSH HAD BEEN RECEPITIVE TO THE POPE'S PROPOSAL FOR SUCH A FORCE IN THEIR FIRST MEETING, BUT THAT THE U.S. HAD CHANGED ITS MIND UNDER PRESSURE FROM ISRAEL. UNTIL GREATER PROGRESS IS REGISTERED IN ENDING THE VIOLENCE AND REESTABLISHING CONFIDENCE, THE VATICAN IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO INTENSIFY ITS APPEAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
HARDT
SEMBLER

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